

VZCZCXRO4367
RR RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHGH RUEHHM RUEHNH RUEHVC
DE RUEHGZ #0487/01 1140139
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 240139Z APR 07
FM AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5994
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5319
RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHPNH/NVC PORTSMOUTH 6267
RUEAHLH/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USUN NEW YORK 0022

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 GUANGZHOU 000487

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/VO, CA/FPP, CA/EX, DS/IP/EAP, DC/CR, DS/CR/VF, DS/CR/PF,
AND INL/HSTC
BEIJING FOR RSO, DHS, CG AND FPU
NVC FOR FPU
USICE/HQ FOR HQINT, HQOAI, CAO AND FDL
US UN FOR RSO-PASS TO DS/FLD/NYFO
HOMELAND SECURITY FOR CIS/FDNS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CVIS](#) [KFRD](#) [CH](#) [KCRM](#) [INL](#) [HSTC](#)

SUBJECT: Fuzhou - Fraud Capital of China (2 of 2): 3 Days in Fuzhou

THIS DOCUMENT IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT
ACCORDINGLY.

REF: A. Guangzhou 00485

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A Conoff from Guangzhou's Fraud Prevention Unit and a LES Investigator visited Fuzhou from January 29-31, performing 14 immigrant-visa field investigations. Of the 14, 12 were confirmed to involve fraud and one applicant could not be located. In many cases, neighbors and village residents are the best resource for uncovering fraud but in some villages, the entire population is active in the deception and consulate investigators are unwelcome guests. This is the second in a three cable series detailing the level of visa fraud activity in the Fuzhou area of Fujian province. End Summary.

Three Days in Fuzhou

¶2. (SBU) Conoff and LES Fraud Prevention Unit Investigator (FPUI), both from Guangzhou's Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) visited Fuzhou in Fujian province from January 29-31 to perform field investigations relating to pending immigrant and non-immigrant visa cases. In what is representative of many Fuzhou cases, Conoff and FPUI investigated 14 suspected cases involving a sham marriage and one non-immigrant visa case involving a Fuzhou travel agency partnership.

¶3. (SBU) Of the fourteen immigrant visa cases that were investigated, all involved suspected sham marriages and twelve involved suspected sham divorces. Conoff and FPUI went to each applicant's most likely addresses, using self-reported home addresses from the application for an immigrant visa as well as addresses on submitted divorce decrees, household registries, and employment certifications to try and confirm the likelihood of cohabitation between the applicant and the supposed ex-spouse. In eleven of the cases, the applicant's residence was located and confirmed by the applicant, applicant's family member, or residence neighbors.

Be a Good Neighbor

¶4. (SBU) Among these eleven cases, all showed strong signs of fraud and in ten cases cohabitation between the applicant and the supposed ex-spouse was confirmed. In two of the cases, the ex-spouse was

seen leaving the applicant's home as Conoff and FPUI arrived. In these two cases neighbors and village residents quickly confirmed the identity of the ex and confirmed the cohabitation with the applicant. In three other cases, neither the applicant nor the ex-spouse was found at the residence but neighbors, asked independently, once again confirmed the on-going cohabitation of the applicant with the original spouse. In an additional three cases it was other family members, children, siblings, or parents, of the applicants and original spouse who were found at home at the residences and confirmed the cohabitation of the couple.

Revealing Residences

¶5. (SBU) In four of the cases, a family member or the applicant was at home and maintained the divorce was still legitimate in questioning by Conoff and FPUI. After identifying themselves as fraud prevention staff from the Consulate, Conoff and FPUI asked for permission to enter the home and look around. In all cases, permission was granted. During the viewing of the home, residents were asked to voluntarily show all bedrooms and closets. Conoff and FPUI also noted displayed photographs and items about the residence such as house shoes, coats, toiletries. When clothing or other items appeared to be those of the supposed ex-spouse, residents were asked to explain. In all cases, residents' stories quickly fell apart as physical evidence in the residence overwhelmed the ability to create stories at a moment's notice.

¶6. (SBU) In one case, the applicant's child, himself a derivative to the visa petition, claimed the woman's closet full of woman's clothes found in the applicant's bedroom were an aunt's. When asked for the relation he claimed the woman was his mother's sister and he gave a name. When leaving the residence Conoff and FPUI found the

GUANGZHOU 00000487 002 OF 003

applicant waiting at the ground floor of the apartment building. The applicant tried to hide but when noticed, agreed to talk to Conoff and FPUI. When asked whose clothes were in his closet, he replied they belonged to his brother's daughter and gave a second name. These wildly inconsistent stories show how far applicants in sham marriage schemes will continue to lie to consular officers, even when caught in the act of perpetrating the fraud.

¶7. (SBU) In a separate case, Conoff and FPUI went to the application address to find it was actually the applicant's father's residence but the applicant happened to be there helping to clean. Upon questioning, she admitted she did not live at the address given but rather with her mother. In fully six of these twelve site visit cases, the applicant provided a false or out-of-date address for their current residence. The applicant then accompanied Conoff and FPUI to her mother's home which was a short walk away. In that residence, while no sign of the ex-spouse was found, there was also little sign of the applicant's continued residence at the home either and the bedroom she claimed as her own was currently occupied by her still sleeping brother.

First Marriage, Still a Sham

¶8. (SBU) Two applicant's cases were first marriages but due to information sent to Post were thought to be suspect. In both cases, without the information submitted by anonymous sources, it would have been difficult to detect and confirm fraud. Both cases involved young, single women marrying Chinese-American males where it was a first marriage for both. In one case, post was sent photos of the applicant with a different man. Upon visiting the applicant's address she recognized the man in the photos as a work colleague and even had photos with him on her computer. She readily gave Conoff and FPUI the phone number of the colleague in the photos but denied any relationship between the two. Upon leaving the applicant's residence, FPUI called the work colleague who quickly admitted he and the applicant actually had a long-time romantic relationship and he was actively assisting her in perpetrating the sham marriage so she could later divorce and petition himself to the United States.

Comment

¶9. (SBU) While in some cases local residents, neighbors, and sometimes even family are happy to discuss applicants engaged in visa fraud, once leaving the confines of Fuzhou's central business district for the surrounding areas of Changle, Fuqing, Lianjiang, and Mawei, it becomes a different story. In each village or community the site of an unfamiliar car quickly starts a verbal early-warning system to alert residents. As the destination becomes clearer, villagers approach to run interference and start collecting intelligence as to whether a foreigner is in the car and if the occupants can speak the local dialect. In the ensuing conversations, questions and answers are repeated back, in louder than needed voices and sometimes a listener or two will suddenly wonder off and disappear. The element of surprise is usually lost in most field investigations.

¶10. (SBU) In many field investigations, despite confirmation from other sources and evidence abounding within the home pointing to cohabitation, the applicant and the supposed ex-spouse are not caught together. With such complicit community involvement it is simply too easy for the ex-spouse to disappear out a back door and wait for investigators to leave. Remittances and overseas links benefit the entire village, not just the family of concern, and in many cases help with a sham marriage has been or will be repaid. It is more difficult to gauge the level of influence of snakeheads, loan sharks, and other criminal influences and the fear factor they contribute to these villages once a few residents are committed to \$40,000 to \$80,000 USD per person to get to the United States. As one Fuzhou resident explained to Conoff, if you want borrow money to start your own business, no one will loan you any but if you say you want to get to America then it is easy to borrow large sums. For to many residents in Fuzhou and its surrounding areas, leaving still seems the best return on investment available.

GUANGZHOU 00000487 003 OF 003

GOLDBERG